

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Gabriel Randolph,)	C/A No.: 1:08-3492-MBS-SVH
)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	
vs.)	
)	REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION
Officer Jeffery, Sgt. C. William, Officer)	
Ben Outlaw, and Captain Miller,)	
)	
Defendants.)	
)	

Plaintiff, who is proceeding *pro se* in this action, is an inmate at Perry Correctional Institution (“PCI”). Plaintiff’s claims are construed as asserted under 28 U.S.C. § 1983, alleging violations of the Eighth Amendment. Before the court are the following motions: (1) Defendants’ Motion for Summary Judgment [Entry #60] and (2) Plaintiff’s Motion for a Preliminary Injunction [Entry #67]. All pretrial proceedings in this case were referred to the undersigned pursuant to the provisions of Local Civil Rule 73.02(B)(2)(d) (D.S.C.). Because the motion for summary judgment is a dispositive motion, this Report and Recommendation is entered for review by the district judge.

I. Factual and Procedural Background

Plaintiff filed his complaint in this action in state court on or about September 16, 2008. Defendants removed the case to federal court on October 14, 2008 [Entry #1]. Defendants filed their motion for summary judgment on October 23, 2009 [Entry #60]. Pursuant to *Roseboro v. Garrison*, 528 F.2d 309 (4th Cir. 1975), the court advised Plaintiff of the summary judgment and dismissal procedures and the possible

consequences if he failed to respond adequately to Defendants' motion [Entry #63]. Plaintiff timely filed a response in opposition to Defendants' motion [Entry #68]. Having carefully considered the parties' submissions and the record in this case, the court recommends Defendants' motion for summary judgment be granted.

In his complaint, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants violated the Eight Amendment by using excessive force, in addition to various state law claims. Specifically, Plaintiff alleges on January 26, 2007, while he was showering, Defendant William ordered him to shave the hair on his chin, which had grown out and needed to be shaved pursuant to PCI policy. (Compl. ¶¶ 12–14). Plaintiff refused the orders of Defendant William. Defendant Miller thereafter approved a use of force shave on Plaintiff, which was videotaped and reviewed by the court. Plaintiff alleges Defendants restrained his hands and legs and placed him in a restraint chair. (Compl. ¶¶ 117–18). According to his complaint, Plaintiff was shaking his head during the shave, when Defendant Jeffery put his arm around Plaintiff's neck, which Plaintiff claimed choked him. Defendants deny that Plaintiff was choked, but instead state that Lieutenant Miller helped stabilize Plaintiff's head for the shave. Nurse Van Heusen also witnessed the use of force shave and noted the following: "During the haircut, [Plaintiff] yelled he was being choked and from my vantage point, [I] could see the officer had a very appropriate chin hold on [Plaintiff], not on his neck." (See Randolph Medical Summary at Entry #60-5). Nurse Van Heusen, who is not a Defendant in this matter, checked Plaintiff after the haircut and found no injuries. He reported that Plaintiff was alert and awake and did not answer when he asked whether

Plaintiff had any problems. Plaintiff claims he was denied medical treatment after the incident.

II. Standard of Review

A federal court must liberally construe pleadings filed by pro se litigants, to allow them to fully develop potentially meritorious cases. *See Cruz v. Beto*, 405 U.S. 319 (1972); *see also Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519 (1972). In considering a motion for summary judgment, the court's function is not to decide issues of fact, but to decide whether there is an issue of fact to be tried. The requirement of liberal construction does not mean that the court can ignore a clear failure in the pleadings to allege facts which set forth a federal claim. *Weller v. Department of Social Services*, 901 F.2d 387 (4th Cir. 1990). Nor can the court assume the existence of a genuine issue of material fact where none exists. If none can be shown, the motion should be granted. Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(c). The movant has the burden of proving that a judgment on the pleadings is appropriate. Once the moving party makes this showing, however, the opposing party must respond to the motion with "specific facts showing that there is a genuine issue for trial." The opposing party may not rest on the mere assertions contained in the pleadings. Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(e); *see also Celotex v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. 317 (1986).

The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure encourage the entry of summary judgment where both parties have had ample opportunity to explore the merits of their cases and examination of the case makes it clear that one party has failed to establish the existence of an essential element in the case, on which that party will bear the burden of proof at

trial. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(c). Where the movant can show a complete failure of proof concerning an essential element of the non-moving party's case, all other facts become immaterial because there can be "no genuine issue of material fact." In the *Celotex* case, the court held that defendants were "entitled to judgment as a matter of law" under Rule 56(c) because the plaintiff failed to make a sufficient showing on essential elements of his case with respect to which he has the burden of proof. *Celotex*, 477 U.S. at 322–323.

III. Analysis

A. Excessive Force

Plaintiff claims Defendants used excessive force during the shave in violation of his Eighth Amendment rights. It is well-established that the use of excessive force upon an inmate by correctional officers violates the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment. *Hudson v. McMillan*, 503 U.S. 1, 5 (1992).

In an excessive force case, a claimant must meet a heavy burden to satisfy the subjective component of the claim; specifically, he must prove that correctional officers applied force "maliciously and sadistically for the very purpose of causing harm" rather than in a good-faith effort to maintain or restore discipline. *Whitley v. Albers*, 475 U.S. 312, 320–21 (1986); *see also Wilkins v. Gaddy*, --- U.S. ----, 130 S.Ct. 1175 (2010). The objective component of an excessive force claim is not nearly as demanding, however, because "[w]hen prison officials maliciously and sadistically use force to cause harm' ... 'contemporary standards of decency are always violated ... whether or not significant injury is evidence. Otherwise, the Eighth Amendment would permit any physical

punishment, no matter how diabolic or inhuman, inflicting less than some arbitrary quantity of injury.” *Wilkins*, 130 S.Ct. at 1179 (quoting *Hudson v. McMillan*, 503 U.S. 1, 7 (1992)).

However, courts must give “wide-ranging deference” to the execution of policies and practices that in the judgment of the prison officials are necessary “to preserve internal order and discipline and to maintain institutional security.” *Whitley*, 475 U.S. at 321–22. The Supreme Court has recognized that prison officials work in an environment where there is an ever-present potential for violence and unrest, and that courts should not substitute their judgment for that of the officials who must make a choice at the moment when the application of force is needed. *Id.* The deference owed to prison administrators extends to “prophylactic or preventive measures intended to reduce the incidence of ... breaches of prison discipline.” *Id.* at 322.

The Supreme Court has directed that several factors should be balanced in determining whether prison officials acted maliciously and sadistically. These factors include (1) the necessity for the application of force; (2) the relationship between the need for force and the amount of force used; (3) the extent of the injury actually inflicted; (4) the extent of the threat to the safety of the staff and prisoners, as reasonably perceived by the responsible officials on the basis of the facts known to them; and (5) the efforts taken by the officials, if any, to temper the severity of the force applied. *Whitley*, 475 U.S. at 321.

After applying the *Whitley* factors to the facts at hand, the court finds Plaintiff has not established a claim for excessive force. First, the use of force was necessary as Plaintiff even admits that he refused to follow Defendant William's order to shave his chin. (*See* Compl.) In addition, there is a rational relationship between the need for force and the amount of force used, as by Plaintiff's own account of the incident he was resisting the shave continuously, even shaking his head as prison officials tried to shave him. Therefore, Plaintiff's actions required that his head be stabilized. Besides Plaintiff's own conclusory allegations, there is no evidence in the record, including the video recording of this incident, which the court has reviewed, that Plaintiff was choked during the use of force shave. *See Smith v. Ozmint*, 578 F.3d 246, 254 (4th Cir. 2009) (citing *Scott v. Harris*, 550 U.S. 372, 380 (2007) (holding the following after a review of use of force haircut involving a restraint chair: "Although the undersigned does not make a credibility determination, '[w]hen opposing parties tell two different stories, one of which is blatantly contradicted by the record, so that no reasonable jury could believe it, a court should not adopt that version of the facts for purposes of ruling on a motion for summary judgment.'"))

According to BOP records, Plaintiff was immediately checked by Nurse Van Heussen and later checked again by Nurse Tippin. According to the evidence submitted, Plaintiff did not have any apparent injuries. (*See* Medical Summary at Entry #60-5) Finally, the evidence submitted indicates Plaintiff's behavior was historically often combative and Defendants were therefore reasonable in perceiving a threat. (*See* Offense

History at Entry #60-6). It does not appear that Defendants used greater force than was necessary to effect the shave.

Therefore, after balancing the *Whitley* factors, the court finds Plaintiff can not establish that Defendants acted maliciously or sadistically. Thus, Plaintiff has failed to state a claim of excessive force against the Defendants and Plaintiff's claim should be dismissed.

B. Qualified Immunity

Defendants also assert that they are entitled to qualified immunity in their individual capacities. The Supreme Court in *Harlow v. Fitzgerald*, 457 U.S. 800, 102 (1982), established the standard which the court is to follow in determining whether the defendant is protected by this immunity. That decision held that government officials performing discretionary functions generally are shielded from liability for civil damages insofar as their conduct does not violate clearly established statutory or constitutional rights of which a reasonable person would have known. *Harlow*, 457 U.S. at 818.

In addressing qualified immunity, the United States Supreme Court has held that "a court must first determine whether the plaintiff has alleged the deprivation of an actual constitutional right at all and, if so, proceed to determine whether that right was clearly established at the time of the alleged violation." *Wilson v. Layne*, 526 U.S. 603, 609 (1999); *see also Suarez Corp. Indus. v. McGraw*, 202 F.3d 676, 685 (4th Cir. 2000). Further, the Supreme Court held that "[d]eciding the constitutional question before addressing the qualified immunity question also promotes clarity in the legal standards for

official conduct, to the benefit of both the officers and the general public.” *Wilson*, 526 U.S. at 609. If the court first determines that no right has been violated, the inquiry ends there “because government officials cannot have known of a right that does not exist.” *Porterfield v. Lott*, 156 F.3d 563, 567 (4th Cir. 1998). As discussed above, Plaintiff has failed to present sufficient evidence to support his constitutional violation allegations. Nevertheless, *assuming arguendo* that Plaintiff has presented sufficient evidence of a constitutional violation, Defendants are entitled to qualified immunity from suit.

In *Maciariello v. Sumner*, 973 F.2d 295 (4th Cir. 1992), the Fourth Circuit further explained the theory of qualified immunity:

Governmental officials performing discretionary functions are shielded from liability for money damages so long as their conduct does not violate clearly established statutory or constitutional rights of which a reasonable person would have known. Moreover, there are two levels at which the immunity shield operates. First, the particular right must be clearly established in the law. Second, the manner in which this right applies to the actions of the official must also be apparent. Officials are not liable for bad guesses in gray areas; they are liable for transgressing bright lines.

Maciariello, 973 F.2d at 298.

In the instant case, Plaintiff has failed to establish any theory of liability upon the part of Defendants, and, furthermore, Plaintiff has failed to establish the existence of any constitutional deprivation. However, if the court were to find that Plaintiff has established some theory of liability upon the part of Defendants, and therefore, the existence of a constitutional deprivation, Defendants are still entitled to qualified immunity. The record before the court shows that as to Plaintiff and the specific events at issue, these

Defendants performed the discretionary functions of their respective official duties in an objectively reasonable fashion. They did not transgress any statutory or constitutional rights of Plaintiff that they were aware of in the discretionary exercise of their respective professional judgments. Thus, to the extent the district judge finds that a constitutional violation occurred, these Defendants are entitled to qualified immunity.

C. Plaintiff's Motion for Injunctive Relief

Plaintiff filed a motion for injunctive relief claiming that an unknown officer at PCI (who does not appear to be named in this case) threatened him by saying, "You'll never write again." He also claims his legal books were taken and his property was not inventoried correctly.

"[P]reliminary injunctions are extraordinary remedies involving the exercise of very far-reaching power to be granted only sparingly and in limited circumstances." *MicroStrategy Inc. v. Motorola, Inc.*, 245 F.3d 335, 339 (4th Cir. 2001). "Because a preliminary injunction affords, on a temporary basis, the relief that can be granted permanently after trial, the party seeking the preliminary injunction must demonstrate by a 'clear showing' that, among other things, it is likely to succeed on the merits at trial." *Id.* (citations omitted). "A plaintiff seeking a preliminary injunction must establish that he is likely to succeed on the merits, that he is likely to suffer irreparable harm in the absence of preliminary relief, that the balance of equities tips in his favor, and that an injunction is in the public interest." *Winter v. Natural Res. Def. Council*, --- U.S. ----, ----, 129 S.Ct. 365, 374 (2008). By statute, the PLRA grants courts the authority to enter a

temporary restraining order or an order for preliminary injunctive relief in civil actions concerning prison conditions; however,

[p]reliminary injunctive relief must be narrowly drawn, extend no further than necessary to correct the harm the court finds requires preliminary relief, and be the least intrusive means necessary to correct that harm. The court shall give substantial weight to any adverse impact on public safety or the operation of a criminal justice system caused by the preliminary relief and shall respect the principles of comity set out in paragraph (1)(B) in tailoring any preliminary relief. Preliminary relief shall automatically expire on the date that is 90 days after its entry, unless the court makes the findings required under subsection (a) (1) for the entry of prospective relief and makes the order final before the expiration of the 90-day period.

18 U.S.C. § 3626(a)(2).

Traditionally, preliminary injunctions are sought to “protect the status quo and to prevent irreparable harm during the pendency of a lawsuit ultimately to preserve the court's ability to render a meaningful judgment on the merits.” *In re Microsoft Corp. Antitrust Litig.*, 333 F.3d 517, 525 (4th Cir. 2003). Mandatory preliminary injunctions, in comparison, compel action. The Fourth Circuit explained:

“Mandatory preliminary injunctions [generally] do not preserve the status quo and normally should be granted only in those circumstances when the exigencies of the situation demand such relief.” *Wetzel v. Edwards*, 635 F.2d 283, 286 (4th Cir. 1980). That is to say, a mandatory preliminary injunction must be necessary both to protect against irreparable harm in a deteriorating circumstance created by the defendant and to preserve the court's ability to enter ultimate relief on the merits of the same kind.

Id. at 526. Here, Plaintiff’s motion for injunctive relief must fail. Plaintiff has not clearly stated why he believes he will suffer irreparable harm, nor has he shown he is likely to

succeed on the merits. Therefore, Plaintiff has failed to establish the elements necessary to demonstrate the need for a preliminary injunction.

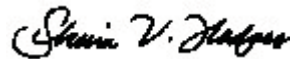
D. State Law Claims

Having found that Defendants are entitled to summary judgment regarding Plaintiff's constitutional claims, it is recommended that the court decline to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over any claims for relief pursuant to state law. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c).

IV. Conclusion

For the reasons discussed above, it is recommended that Defendants' Motion for Summary Judgment [Entry #60] be granted and Plaintiff's Motion for Injunctive Relief [Entry #67] be denied.

IT IS SO RECOMMENDED.



August 3, 2010
Florence, South Carolina

Shiva V. Hodges
United States Magistrate Judge

**The parties are directed to note the important information in the attached
“Notice of Right to File Objections to Report and Recommendation.”**